

# Google: PH 8th country with most deleted YouTube vids

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**FIGHTING FAKE NEWS** Representatives Robert Ace Barbers and Reynaldo Acop (left photo) confer with each other during the second hearing of the House inquiry on the proliferation of fake news on

social media on Tuesday. One of the invited resource speakers, Philippine Daily Inquirer associate publisher Juliet Javellana (right), delivers the paper's position on the matter. —Photos by Niño Jesus Orbeta and House of Representatives

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines ranked 8th among countries with the most number of videos taken down on YouTube for violating the company's guidelines.

More than 181,000 videos related to the Philippines were removed in the 3rd quarter of 2024 alone after being flagged for misinformation or hate speech, a local official of tech giant Google told the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

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In a presentation made during a House joint committee hearing, Yves Gonzales, head for public policy and government relations at Google Philippines, said 181,841 videos had been deleted during the period due to violations of the site's community and advertising guidelines.

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He said 97 percent of the videos were taken down by artificial intelligence, 2 percent were reported by regular users, while 1 percent was flagged by organizations and government agencies.

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Gonzalez assured the public that, as much as possible, YouTube videos that infringe on the platform's rules and regulations were immediately taken down before they reached wide viewership.

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“We remove misleading content that poses a risk of egregious harm. These include general information that can cause real-world harm, election misinformation, and medical misinformation,” he noted.

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YouTube, he said, adheres to the “4Rs responsibility framework” in removing content.

The framework revolves around raising high-quality information, reducing the spread of misinformation, and rewarding trusted content creators.

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According to a Google Philippines official, the platform makes exceptions for “purposeful videos that meet our Edsa (Education, Documentary, Scientific and Artistic) criteria.”

But he stressed that “this is not a free pass to spread harmful disinformation and rhetoric. Everyone is subjected to our community guidelines from private citizens to the most visible public figures.”

Citing YouTube’s community guidelines quarterly transparency report for the third quarter of last year, he said 9.1 million videos, 4.8 million channels, and 1.3 billion comments were removed globally for various violations.

Of these, about 80,000 were removed for violating misinformation policies.

## **Curbing fake news**

Gonzales was one of the resource speakers who attended the second hearing of the so-called House tri-comm inquiry into the proliferation of fake news on social media.

The tri-comm is made up of the House committees on public order and safety, information and communications technology, and on public information.

At the start of Tuesday's proceedings, Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers, whose privilege speech in December prompted the inquiry, reiterated that the objective was not to suppress freedom of expression.

"We are all aware that this is provided for in our Constitution and we'd like to respect and honor the right of everyone to his own opinion and to his own expression," he said.

The joint panel, he said, only seeks to establish a set of rules or a policy framework to prevent the use of social media from spreading falsehoods.

The tri-comm issued show cause orders to the Philippine offices of Facebook

(Meta) and TikTok (Byte Dance) for their absence at Tuesday's hearing.

It also issued subpoenas to around 20 social media influencers and vloggers, including former press secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles, who failed to attend congressional hearings despite receiving show-cause orders.

## **Pursuit of truth**

Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) associate publisher Juliet Javellana, who also appeared as a resource person, said the paper shared the concerns about the spread of fake news and disinformation as "a very critical challenge of our time."

"The Inquirer would like to reiterate our commitment to the pursuit of truth as the fundamental mission of journalism and our essential role in a democracy," Javellana said.

"And we do that through a very clear set of editorial policies and guidelines... (for) transparency and accountability to our readers," she said.

PDI, she said, adheres to the Journalism Code of Ethics and is a member of

several alliances that wage the battle against fake news, such as the Philippine Press Institute, the World Association of News Publishers, and the GMA Network-led Panata Kontra Fake News.

“We are one with the committee’s noble objective of fighting disinformation and fake news because of their adverse impact on individuals, institutions, and public discourse,” Javellana said.

“The media industry globally is grappling with disinformation and targeted attacks, which are amplified on social media via algorithms or troll farms.”

She asserted that these affect trust in media organizations and make the digital space not an ideal or safe venue for public discourse.

## **Better accountability**

But Javellana said, “any regulation or amendments to our laws must not be used to infringe on our fundamental freedoms, to stifle dissent necessary to a healthy democracy or to foster a climate of fear and we know the committee is conscious about the thin line between

regulation and suppression of freedom of expression and of the press.”

She underscored the need to update some of the country’s laws because of the emergence of new technologies, such as AI or deepfakes, that could be used to produce harmful content.

“We share in the consensus here, we see a need for more gatekeeping, better accountability from big technology companies, Google, Meta, Tiktok because those are the platforms used by the majority of Filipinos,” Javellana said.

“The spread of disinformation and propaganda can endanger, not just individuals, but national security, for example, the West Philippine issue, and undermine our democracy, for example, during elections.”

“Ultimately, we believe in promoting better public awareness and education as the more effective weapon to counter disinformation and cybercrimes,” she said.